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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SANTO DOMINGO 000029

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/25
TAGS: [PREL](#) [DR](#) [HO](#)
SUBJECT: WHA A/S VALENZUELA'S DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ ON
HAITI AND HONDURAS

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 23

CLASSIFIED BY: Alexander Margulies, Counselor for Political &
Economic Affairs, State, ECOPOL; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

SUMMARY

11. (C) President Leonel Fernandez, in a 01/18/10 meeting with visiting WHA Assistant Secretary Arturo Valenzuela, described his efforts to centralize in the Dominican Republic international discussions aimed at developing a long-term strategic plan for Haitian reconstruction and sustainable development. Fernandez also described his attempt to resolve once and for all the Honduran crisis by obtaining a written commitment from President-elect Porfirio Lobo on national reconciliation, followed by Fernandez' attendance at Lobo's inauguration with several Central American presidents, and culminating with Fernandez escorting by then ex-President Manuel Zelaya from the Brazilian embassy to an airplane to take him to the Dominican Republic for a brief period before Zelaya travels to Mexico. A/S Valenzuela said that he favored Fernandez' approach to developing the international community's long-term Haiti strategy and would raise this in Washington. With respect to Honduras, A/S Valenzuela recommended that any document signed by Lobo embody the commitments made in the San Jose-Tegucigalpa Accords and also seek to involve the Organization of American States in the process of verifying compliance with those agreements, as this would provide a mechanism that eventually could lead to readmission of Honduras to that organization following its suspension after the 06/28/09 coup. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) A/S Valenzuela, accompanied by Charge and Pol-Econ Counselor, met with President Leonel Fernandez for one hour the evening of 01/18/10. Foreign Minister Carlos Morales Troncoso joined the meeting near its conclusion.

COORDINATING HAITI RELIEF EFFORTS

13. (C) President Fernandez opened the meeting with a reference to the hemispheric preparatory conference on Haiti relief and reconstruction that he had hosted earlier that day (Reftel). He said he was concerned about ensuring that the 01/25/10 meeting to be hosted by Canada in Montreal would not run on a separate track from the process commenced in the Dominican Republic (DR). The President explained that he hoped the technical working group proposed at that day's meeting would hold its first session in February and continue meeting every two weeks to present a complete Action Plan at the follow-on conference he has called in April in

Santo Domingo. The Action Plan would be subject to revision at the April conference and then unveiled in May at or on the margins of the EU-Latin America Summit in Madrid.

14. (C) A/S Valenzuela agreed that international discussions on Haiti reconstruction and development should be held in the region, with strong Caribbean participation, and that, consequently, it made sense for the talks to be held in the DR. He said that he would raise this issue with the Secretary of State upon his return to Washington. Valenzuela then recommended that Fernandez move quickly to reconcile his and Spain's (speaking for the EU as well) proposed course of action with that being advanced by the Canadians. The Assistant Secretary thought that this should not be a problem, based on his own conversations that day with Spanish Vice President Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega and Canadian Foreign Minister for the Americas Peter Kent. He informed the President that the French are floating the idea of a Haiti meeting in Martinique, adding that President Barack Obama and Brazilian President Lula da Silva discussed the Martinique option earlier that day. A/S Valenzuela also questioned the desire to link the unveiling of a long-term strategic plan on Haitian relief and reconstruction to the EU-Latin America Summit in Madrid, noting that there did not seem to be a firm connection between one thing and the other.

15. (C) With respect to ongoing Haiti relief efforts, A/S

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Valenzuela informed Fernandez that the USG had contacted the Cuban mission in Washington to say that the United States is prepared to provide supplies to the Cuban medical mission in Haiti. When it comes to providing humanitarian relief to Haitians, he stressed, the United States is prepared to put politics and ideology to the side.

NEW INITIATIVE RE HONDURAS

16. (C) Turning to the situation in Honduras, Fernandez commented that he does not see a solution coming before the 01/27/10 inauguration of Pepe Lobo as de facto President Roberto Micheletti refuses to leave office until then. He said that he has been talking with Lobo and Zelaya and both have agreed to an initiative he has proposed. The plan, as outlined by Fernandez is for:

n Lobo to sign a document in the DR and prepared by Fernandez, agreeing to safe conduct for Zelaya, an end to persecution of anti-coup factions, and a commitment to strengthen democracy in Honduras;

n Fernandez would then have Guatemalan President Colom and Costa Rican President Arias join him in travelling to Honduras for Lobo's inauguration;

n Following the inauguration, Fernandez, accompanied by his Central American counterparts, will proceed to the Brazilian embassy and escort Zelaya to the airport, where Fernandez and Zelaya will board a plane for the Dominican Republic;

n Zelaya will stay in the DR for a few days, then proceed to Mexico, from whence he will seek admission to the Central American Parliament and obtain legal immunity.

17. (C) Fernandez added that he will be talking to Colom and Arias about accompanying him to Honduras. He said he would be meeting

later that evening with Brazilian Foreign Ministry Secretary General Antonio Aguiar Patriota to discuss this plan. The Brazilians, the president confided, are concerned about what will happen with their embassy

18. (C) A/S Valenzuela asked what Fernandez would do if Micheletti attends Lobo's inauguration, noting that many regional countries are reluctant to attend the event because of this concern. He noted that the USG had given Micheletti until January 15 to leave office or see further visa revocations of his supporters, but the de facto leader refused to budge. On the other hand, A/S Valenzuela recounted, Lobo had assured the United States that Micheletti would not be there.

19. (C) Fernandez replied that he would not attend the inauguration if Micheletti were present. If that happened, he would wait until after Lobo's acceptance speech, and then pay a call on Lobo before proceeding to escort Zelaya out of the country. A/S Valenzuela emphasized the importance of having the Brazilians understand this, opining that they are moving toward accepting Lobo's legitimacy and that he would discuss this later with Patriota. Fernandez agreed that the Brazilians seem to be coming around to the realization that there is no other option for Honduras, that Lobo was elected fairly without fraud, that the candidates were all selected before the coup, and that the alternative to Lobo at this stage is "anarchy and violence." Zelaya's agreement to this initiative is also important, Fernandez stated, for his own domestic political situation, as he cannot be seen supporting a dictatorship.

110. (C) A/S Valenzuela then turned to the document that Fernandez is to prepare for Lobo's signature, stressing the importance of having it contain a requirement that Lobo comply with the San Jose-Tegucigalpa Accords, particularly the establishment of a Truth

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Commission. This, the A/S emphasized, will give Lobo increased legitimacy and can serve as a mechanism to get the OAS involved as the organization tasked with verifying compliance with the agreements. He explained that a two-thirds vote of OAS members will be needed to lift Honduras' post-coup suspension from the organization, and that a stamp of approval from an OAS verification committee would help achieve this. A/S Valenzuela concluded by pointing out that the USG has told Lobo he needs to form a national unity government, bring about the retirement of Armed Forces Commander Gen. Vasquez, and form the Truth Commission.

111. (C) With respect to Fernandez' appeal to Central American presidents to join him at the Lobo inauguration, A/S Valenzuela suggested that the Dominican leader also reach out to El Salvadoran President Funes. Fernandez said he would consider this, noting that Colombia's Uribe may attend, while Mexico had suggested it would send its foreign minister. A/S Valenzuela said that the USG was thinking about keeping a low profile at the inauguration, leaving it to regional governments to first show support for Lobo, and that he himself would wait for a reasonable period after the swearing in before visiting Honduras again. Fernandez thought this was wise.

112. (C) Foreign Minister Morales joined the meeting at this point, stating that Lobo had just agreed to come to the DR on Wednesday, January 20 to meet with Fernandez and sign the document. A/S Valenzuela recommended that they keep this visit under wraps until the document was signed. Fernandez and Morales agreed, saying that they would say nothing beforehand, then stage a "flash press conference" following the meeting to announce Lobo's signature on the document.

COMMENT

¶13. (C) President Fernandez followed through on description to A/S Valenzuela of his Honduran initiative, hosting Lobo and five other Honduran political figures on 1/20, jointly signing with Lobo an "Accord for National Reconciliation and the Strengthening of Democracy in Honduras," and announcing publicly that he will attend Lobo's inauguration and then escort Zelaya back to Santo Domingo (Reftel).
Lambert